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President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 122

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council

The President: I thank all present for being here today to discuss the important issue of Security Council reform. I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia and Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates for agreeing to serve as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. They have both taken on an important responsibility, and I am confident that they will receive members' support in both words and actions. I would also like to sincerely thank the former co-Chairs, Ambassador Jinga of Romania and Ambassador Khiari of Tunisia, for their diligent and valuable work. I would like to make three points in order to frame our discussion today.

First, the reform of the Security Council will not just affect the work that takes place a few doors down from us in the Council Chamber. Rather, it will impact the future of the entire United Nations system. We are hearing more and more calls for the United Nations to change and evolve at a faster pace. Those calls have come from across the world, not just from States Members of the United Nations. In fact, in September, high-level representatives of Member States stood at this rostrum and stressed the need for the United Nations to adapt to a changing world, and many of them even made direct calls for Security Council reform.

We must remember that the Security Council is the organ charged with maintaining international peace and security. Its decisions can mean the difference between life or death. That is why the Security Council often makes international headlines and why its work is seen as one of the major indicators of the United Nations role in the world. Moreover, that is why we must answer those calls for change, in particular in relation to the Security Council. If we do not, the continued relevance and, frankly, the very survival of the United Nations are at stake.

Secondly, in answering those calls, we do not need to look further than this Hall. All of us sitting here today hold the keys to change. The Council was designed in 1945, when the world looked very different from how it looks today. However, there has been only one change in the Council's membership since then, and that came through the expansion in the number of non-permanent members in 1965, more than half a century ago. But the failure to change is not for lack of trying. Next year, the Open-ended Working Group will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of its establishment. We are also approaching our tenth year of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. However, the time for merely trying is up. Now is the time for action. For our purposes, action means dialogue — real dialogue, real listening, real interaction. Without those elements, the reform process will become nothing but an exercise in reading out statements. It will feature nothing but the repetition of well-known,

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static positions. In that case, what is the incentive for compromise? Where can convergences emerge from? How can we ever move forward?

That brings me to my third point, namely, that we must look to the process ahead. It must be credible. Member States must believe and trust in it. That is why I am committed to transparency and inclusivity. After consultations with the co-Chairs and Member States, we shall start that process as early as possible, and a full calendar will be circulated in advance to Member States to allow for forward planning. I hope that that approach will both enhance the quality of our discussions and facilitate engagement by all delegations. During this session of the General Assembly, the intergovernmental negotiation process must lead to meaningful progress. That is our collective duty. However, how that happens and the pace at which it happens is up to the Assembly. My team and I are here to support the process in any way we can.

I cannot skirt around the issue today; I am compelled to address it head-on. And, in doing so, I need to admit that not all of us see eye to eye on the issue of Security Council reform. In fact, some of us are at opposite ends of the spectrum. However, some of the most difficult negotiations throughout history started out in just that way. In many cases, parties could not even meet in the same room. That means that we are already a step ahead, and we too can come closer to the middle. We too can, day by day, make what may seem like an impossible agreement become possible. We too can make history. We can start through dialogue, and we can start today.

Mr. Sesay (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the African Union.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on agenda item 122, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council". We acknowledge and strongly appreciate your opening remarks, and we wish to reiterate the commitment of the States members of the African Union to this very important issue, in spite of the tremendous difficulties that exist, as you seek to guide and move the process forward. Let me also use this occasion to congratulate you once again, on behalf of the African States, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

Let me also congratulate Mr. Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We also express our support and readiness to work with the co-Chairs in building on the gains made so far in the reform process. We also want to thank the previous co-Chairs, Ambassadors Mohamed Khiari and Ion Jinga, the Permanent Representatives of Tunisia and Romania, respectively, for their stewardship of the process during the seventy-first session.

Following the 2005 World Summit and its Outcome, a number of Heads of State and Government, speaking at the general debate of the Assembly this year, continued to reaffirm the need to reform the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, democratic, effective, transparent, accessible and legitimate. We must therefore seek to reach an agreement on a reform model that would take into account the core values of the United Nations.

As a group, the African States remains convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that upholds the principles, objectives and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to achieve a fairer world based on universalism, equity and regional balance. To that end, we remain true and faithful to decision 62/557, on the topic before us today, and other relevant General Assembly decisions aimed at a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, while encompassing the five main clusters and taking into account their interconnectedness, as agreed by the Assembly.

It is clear that there is general agreement to reform the Security Council, despite the existence of some disagreement on the exact method for achieving the reform. What is notable, however, is the fact that there has been convergence in the intergovernmental negotiations, including growing support for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. In fact, that view is shared by a cross-section of the membership of the Assembly, and it is in line with the political commitment made by our leaders in 2005.

Moreover, there is considerable support for the inclusion of small and medium-sized States, and of course enhanced African representation, in an expanded Security Council. As a group, we note that the main

aim of the various groups and stakeholders' positions is to ensure that the Council represents the present global geopolitical realities. That, we believe, will help to ensure the promotion and preservation of the principles of equity and democracy, as well as further enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Security Council.

Since the adoption of decision 62/557, the reform process has, at best, forged ahead cautiously and at a very slow pace. The positions and proposals of the various groups and Member States have been stated and restated during the many exchanges during the various intergovernmental negotiations. Convergences, divergences and possible sticking areas are now very well known. There is no doubt that past exchanges have been interactive and productive. However, actual negotiations have not yet begun. That, I believe, is an appropriate point to review, so as to achieve a meaningful reform process. It is now time to move from rhetoric to action and produce the desired results indicated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. We therefore hope that the spirit of an effective interactive approach that focuses on a possible negotiating process in a not-too-distant future will dictate the pace of the reform process.

At this stage, a work plan, a timeline for negotiations and the modalities by which agreements could be reached on given issues are of great necessity. That could help set the pace for moving the reform process in a more meaningful direction with a view to driving it towards real negotiations. It is therefore crucial for the entire membership of the Assembly to agree first on the principles and criteria of the negotiations vis-à-vis the five negotiable clusters and their relationship. Accordingly, in seeking progress on the reform process, we must at this stage endeavour to reach an agreement on how to move forward and reconcile the outcomes set out in the various documents produced during the sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first sessions, with a view to forming the basis for the work of the intergovernmental negotiations during this session. What is of critical significance in guiding the reform process is the acknowledgement of the interlinkages among the five negotiable clusters.

We cannot talk about the size of an enlarged Security Council without talking about the categories of membership, since enlargement of the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories will definitely affect its size. Also, the size of an enlarged Council will affect the cluster on equitable regional representation. In other words, in order to correct the current imbalance in the Security Council, we must enlarge its size, which must also take into account the need to redress the protracted historical injustice done to Africa in terms of representation in the Council. That therefore explains the need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, as opposed to a piecemeal and/or intermediate procedural reform of the Council.

Considering the present international landscape, it is unacceptable that Africa is the only continent not to be represented in the permanent category of Council membership, while it is also underrepresented in the non-permanent category. We will therefore continue to demand the allocation of no less than two permanent seats to Africa, with all the prerogatives and privileges of the permanent members, and a total of five non-permanent seats. The selection of such representatives will be done by our regional organization, the African Union, which has enviable credentials in selecting its candidates to serve in multilateral organizations, including the United Nations.

That demand, which is a continent-wide aspiration, is aimed at ensuring Africa's right to fair and equitable geographical representation on the Security Council. The need to adhere to that demand and to address the grossly unjust scenario is fundamental. A delay would mean further perpetuating and compounding the existing injustice and, concomitantly, denying the region its rightful place in the major decision-making organ of the Organization. We are therefore pleased that a considerable number of Member States support the enlargement of the Security Council to reflect equitable regional representation.

Our continued participation in this debate is firmly rooted in our commitment to the Common African Position, articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We remain firmly convinced that the Common African Position continues to enjoy the broadest support of the majority of the membership and that it remains a viable option in the reform process. Africa therefore continues to urge all interest groups and stakeholders and the wider United Nations membership to demonstrate their commitment to correcting the historical injustice by concretely supporting the African position, which will clearly lead to reforming the Council so that it can become a more inclusive, democratic and effective organ.

In conclusion, we keenly look forward to the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. We hope that the session will build upon the progress made so far and will accelerate the pace in attaining concrete gains towards fulfilling the forthright vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Africa is very much committed to the important issue of reform. We therefore look forward to working with you, Mr. President, and the general membership within the intergovernmental negotiations for a comprehensive reform, as stipulated under Assembly decision 62/557. We will remain open to working alongside and/or together with any other initiative that takes into account the level of commitment and support that the Common African Position has gained so far. We continue to call for more frank debates, which will generate the necessary political will, leading to the much-needed reform of the Security Council in order to better reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

At the outset, I would like to highlight the support of the Arab Group for your efforts, Mr. President, at the helm of the General Assembly during this session. In that regard, our Group welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiation process on the reform of the Security Council. I cannot fail to commend the efforts of the co-Chairs at the previous session, namely, Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Permanent Representative of Tunisia, and Ambassador Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania. I would like to thank them for having brought the points of views of the groups and countries closer together in the context of those negotiations.

The reform of, and equitable representation in, the Security Council are among the main principles of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, given the major challenges that the international community faces. Those challenges make us even more determined to step up efforts to strengthen the role of the Security Council so that it can better deal with the challenges it faces in a transparent and credible way. Four years after the start of the negotiations to expand the number of Security Council members and to improve its working methods, during which several initiatives were presented by countries and groups of countries, including the Arab Group, it has become important to move forward with Security Council reform and to seek to achieve consensus-based decisions based on agreement among countries on the principles of change and reform, in particular given the significant changes that have taken place in the world since the United Nations was established in 1945. However, we do not necessarily need to set a timeline that would prevent the finding of a comprehensive solution to reform.

In that regard, the Arab Group reiterates once again that the intergovernmental negotiations within the General Assembly represent the only way to find a solution, in line with decision 62/557, in the five categories of reform, namely, membership, the veto power, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council and the working methods of the Council, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

The Arab Group also underscores that all of those issues are closely linked. The various negotiations need to take into consideration all those issues in order to achieve comprehensive reform. The Arab Group also wishes to reiterate that restarting the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-second session should include all positions and proposals put forward by Member States during the negotiations. There is no doubt whatsoever that such a basis should guide the two co-Chairs as they seek to reopen the negotiations aimed at achieving consensus among Member States and making progress in that regard. The Arab Group reaffirms its position to preserve the consistent position of the Security Council and not to obstruct the intergovernmental negotiations in any way by imposing measures that are not consensus-based.

We face numerous challenges, including the veto power. The arbitrary use of the veto by some Member States has harmed the credibility of decision-making within the Security Council. That has sometimes led to the Security Council being unable to shoulder its responsibilities. The Council has therefore been unable to take the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security. The use of the veto power by permanent members has shown that those countries protect their national interests or the interests of their allies. It is true that, in recent years, the veto power has not been used as often as in previous times. However, it has shown itself to be an effective way to prevent

some countries from shouldering their responsibilities. Over the past 20 years, the veto was used 27 times to protect Israel from the consequences of its practices in the occupied Palestinian territories.

It is crucial that we improve the Security Council's working methods so as to make it more effective and more transparent. At the same time, we need to reach agreement on standing rules of procedure, as the ones we have now are provisional. Similarly, the number of plenary Security Council meetings needs to be increased, thereby strengthening the role of the countries affected by the issues being discussed by the Council. Such meetings would provide concrete opportunities for non-members of the Security Council to participate in its debates. Moreover, the number of closed meetings needs to be reduced and should become the exception rather than the rule. Decisions and statements available to the Council need be made readily accessible. Consultations with countries concerned by the issues being discussed by the Security Council need to be increased in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations. The subsidiary bodies and committees of the Security Council need to make information concerning their work available. Furthermore, the Security Council needs to show greater respect for its mandate.

The position of the Group of Arab States with regard to the reform of the Security Council is well-known, namely, that its member States are asking for permanent Arab representation, as well as proportional representation in the non-permanent member category. Ultimately, the Arab Group is committed to participating constructively in the next round of intergovernmental negotiations with a view to reaching consensus that will allow us to comprehensively and effectively reform the Security Council.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Four: Brazil, Germany, India and my own country, Japan.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this important and timely debate. I welcome your intention "to promote a credible process to address the reform of the Security Council", as you mentioned in the general debate in September (*A/72/PV.3, p.6*), as well as this morning. You can count on our full support in making this a credible process. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. The Group of Four stands ready to support them in undertaking their important role.

The reform of the Security Council is long overdue. If we truly seek to preserve the credibility of the working of the General Assembly, and indeed of the entire United Nations, there is no more time to lose. That is the first message that I would like to convey to everyone today. To underline the urgency of making real progress, let me just name a few milestones in the long history of efforts to reform the Security Council.

First, in 1979, a request was submitted for the inclusion of an item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council" on the agenda of the General Assembly. Secondly, this year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 47/62, in December 1992, which requested the Secretary-General to invite Member States to submit written comments on that issue. Thirdly, the 2005 World Summit Outcome clearly called on Heads of State and Government to support early reform of the Security Council. Lastly, at the end of the current session, it will have been 10 years since the General Assembly adopted decision 62/557 to initiate the intergovernmental negotiations. Sadly, despite all those efforts, we are still very far from where we should be.

Nonetheless, we were encouraged to hear you say, Sir, upon your election as President of the General Assembly last spring that,

> "[t]here is a high degree of accord that the time is ripe to transform the Security Council into a twenty-first century body" (*A/71/PV.83, p.3*).

The Group of Four fully agrees. The Group will spare no efforts to translate those words into action under your able leadership, Sir, and in cooperation with other Member States.

My second message is the following: text-based negotiations should be initiated immediately. That is precisely the process that we use to translate words into action here in the United Nations. Out of 193 Member States, an overwhelming majority of 164 support beginning text-based negotiations. The Group of Four already underlined that fact in a statement delivered on its behalf by the representative of Germany to the General Assembly last July (see A/71/PV.92). I also appreciate

the initiative that the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took on behalf of the L.69 group to submit a letter that clearly articulates that same fact and sets the record straight with regard to the overwhelming view of the Assembly.

The time for simply repeating statements and emphasizing differences is over. With that in mind, I respectfully ask the President of the General Assembly to grant the co-Chairs his full support for initiating text-based negotiations without further delay. That is not merely the request of a particular group of countries, but a necessity in order to ensure the credibility of the process. After all, what other negotiations in the history of the United Nations have continued for decades without a text? The positions and proposals of Member States are reflected in the framework document and its annex, which provide a basis for negotiations. Additionally, the paper issued by the previous co-Chairs during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, entitled "Elements of commonality and issues for further consideration", can also serve as a reference. The necessary and logical next step is to prepare a concise and operational negotiation text — preferably in the form of a draft resolution. We need to launch text-based negotiations now, indeed as early as possible during the current session, so as to allow sufficient time for meaningful progress to be made during the remainder of the session.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that an early reform of the Council is needed in order to make it more legitimate, effective and representative, thereby reflecting the realities of the twenty-first century. In order to achieve that goal, increasing representation in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories is required. There is broad support from Member States for that method of expanding Security Council membership. Its enlargement should consider the contribution of Member States to the maintenance of international peace and security. It also needs to enhance regional representation in the Security Council by ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of unrepresented or underrepresented regions are adequately taken into account. In particular, the historical injustice that Africa has suffered should be redressed through representation in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

Secretary-General Guterres is taking bold and necessary steps to reform the United Nations across its three pillars, in order to render it fit for the twenty-first century. The Group of Four supports his efforts. Another indispensable element of reforming and strengthening the United Nations must be reform of one of its principal organs, the Security Council. In the Secretary-General's own words, reform of the United Nations will not be complete without reform of the Security Council. Progress in Security Council reform is critical, and all the elements are present. If we can put them together, we can succeed. We must succeed. The legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness of the Security Council are at stake and, with them, the maintenance of international peace and security. As President Mandela said, it always seems impossible until it is done.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on Security Council reform. We commend your commitment to a reform process that is credible, transparent and inclusive. Building on those same principles, the Uniting for Consensus group looks forward to cooperating with the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Imnadze. We warmly welcome them in their new capacity and wish to express our full support for them in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations session.

The credibility of a membership-driven process such as the intergovernmental negotiations depends on its transparency and inclusiveness. Only through a transparent process that takes into account the voices of all Member States can we jointly define the consensual path that the Uniting for Consensus group believes is the key to making concrete progress. All we have to do is avoid the obstacles that have so far prevented us from achieving our common goal and work in a true spirit of flexibility and compromise.

Over the years, the Uniting for Consensus group has consistently pointed out that the main roadblock to reform is the demand for an increase in the number of permanent members on the Council. At the same time, we have offered a compromise solution consisting of longer-term non-permanent members with the possibility of an immediate re-election, coupled with a more equitable distribution of seats among regional groups. Longer-term seats would fulfil the legitimate desire of some Member States to make a greater contribution to the work of the Council. That reform model would enhance regional representation as follows. Africa

would constitute the largest group on the reformed Council, while the Asia-Pacific region would have the highest percentage increase and the representation of both Latin America and Eastern Europe would double. Our proposed distribution would also enable cross-regional groupings such as the Group of Arab States to have greater, more stable representation. At the intergovernmental negotiations meeting on 8 May we distributed a chart with a breakdown of our regional representation proposal. A copy of it is available on PaperSmart, attached to my statement.

Our initiative is the fruit of an inclusive vision that we are firmly convinced would bring about a more representative, democratic, accountable, transparent and effective Council. So we were taken aback by the opposition that some delegations expressed last year to the principles of democracy and representation. On the one hand, it revealed the true underlying reasons for the current stalemate. On the other, it showed us how urgently we need a serious discussion of the principles underpinning Security Council reform. Without clarity on what we are aiming for, we will never reach our destination. We expect Member States to finally be given the opportunity to engage in just such a discussion during this session, paving the way for the next steps before us, including text-based negotiations.

Last year the whole United Nations membership agreed that — and I quote the co-Chairs' final document,

> "The intergovernmental negotiations process should build on the work done in previous years, so that convergence will increase gradually with a view to garnering the widest possible political acceptance."

This document enables us to say unequivocally that all Member States agree with the idea of expanding the number of non-permanent seats on the Council. All Member States agree that such an increase should favour countries belonging to the underrepresented regions of the world. To that, we should add that a significant and growing number of Member States are opposed to an expansion of the veto and indeed support limitations on its use.

If we are to truly build on the work of previous years, then the middle ground for a compromise solution leading to Security Council reform can be mapped out only on the basis of these three broad areas of agreement. They are the pillars of our new Council, which we all want to reflect the reality of the contemporary world. But the reality of the twenty-first century is constantly evolving, with new regional actors and new global challenges continuing to emerge in a changing reality to which the Council must constantly adapt. There is no better guarantee of that adaptability than regular elections, which would also make the Security Council more democratic, accountable and inclusive by offering all Member States, rather than a select few, the opportunity to make a greater and more frequent contribution to the Council's work.

After almost 25 years of focusing on demands for new permanent seats, which would benefit only a handful of Member States, it is high time to give a concrete chance to all Member States and offer real prospects to the groups of States and regions of the world that are underrepresented on the Council. We see no possibility that adding new vetoes could make a new Council more effective, more responsive to international crises or better able to cope with today's global challenges.

The Uniting for Consensus group stands ready to cooperate with you, Mr. President, with the new intergovernmental negotiations co-Chairs and the whole membership to advance this process, with the common goal of increasing the Council's legitimacy in the eyes of both the general membership and international public opinion, thereby enhancing its authority and, ultimately, its effectiveness. We are willing to redouble our efforts to achieve reform without delay, building on the many existing convergences among Member States to arrive at a comprehensive reform of the Security Council that will garner the broadest possible consensus by enlarging the Council with new elected members and a more balanced and equitable representation of regional groups.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as our contribution to today's debate on the question of Security Council reform.

CARICOM would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your decision to appoint Ambassadors Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for the current session. We would also like to express our appreciation to them for accepting the appointment. CARICOM looks

forward to working with them and with Member States to advance the Assembly's work under this agenda item, and we reiterate our full support for the process. We would also like to thank Ambassadors Ion Jinga of Romania and Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia for their able stewardship of this process during the seventy-first session.

In your address to the First Committee on 2 October (see A/C.1/72/PV.2), Mr. President, you called on Member States to summon the political will to do more in the context of our work on disarmament and international security. Today CARICOM extends that call to Member States in the context of their work on reform of the Security Council, as we believe that political will is crucial to achieving forward movement on this long-standing issue. It is incumbent on all of us to demonstrate our commitment to the goal of reform, as it is the Member States themselves that must work to achieve it.

In 1993, when the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council to consider matters related to Security Council reform, that decision was based on its recognition of the need to

> "review the membership of the Security Council and related matters in view of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries, as well as the changes in international relations" (*resolution 48/26, third preambular paragraph*).

Two and a half decades later, that need has not been comprehensively addressed, although we have had limitless opportunities to work to restructure the Council in order to bring it into line with current realities.

CARICOM wants to see progress on the issue, and we believe that it is possible, given the tremendous number of ideas that have been generated since the start of our debates on the question of Security Council reform. We are conscious, however, that progress requires putting those ideas to work, and many Member States, including the members of CARICOM, have put forward proposals and articulated their positions on how to achieve progress on the issue. Beyond that, Member States have agreed on the forum within which that progress is to be pursued, namely, the intergovernmental negotiations.

We have heard the arguments against having a negotiating text. After two and a half decades of very little progress, CARICOM believes that our discussions must zero in on those fundamental issues that divide us on the basis of clearly laid-out positions and proposals. I will again allude to your 2 October address to the First Committee, Mr. President, when you urged Member States to be constructive and reach across the aisle. CARICOM is prepared to engage constructively, as we have always done, and we are hopeful that this session's intergovernmental negotiations will indeed build on what has been achieved so far.

In conclusion, CARICOM remains committed to the goal of reform of the Security Council as soon as possible. As a group of small island and low-lying coastal developing States, CARICOM believes that small island developing States have a critical stake in the maintenance of international peace and security, and are therefore well positioned to contribute to the work of the Council. We stand ready to work with all Member States for speedy reform of the Council.

Ms. Stener (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

I would like to begin by thanking the previous co-Chairs and all who have done a great job in laying the groundwork for this discussion. Let me also thank you, Mr. President, for initiating today's debate and for appointing the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Georgia to lead us in our discussions. We are in good hands.

I reaffirm the commitment of tl e Nordic countries to engaging in the collective efforts to reform the Security Council. Given the global and geopolitical challenges facing the United Nations, ensuring the effectiveness of the Security Council is more important than ever. We are encouraged by the momentum for reform that is currently energizing the work of the Secretariat and Member States, and we look forward to listening to and working with other Member States from all regions in support of reform.

The Security Council must become more transparent, effective, accountable and representative than it is now. That requires reform. An important and desirable step forward would be negotiations, based on a text. The Nordic countries support a balanced expansion of the Security Council. The aim must be to better reflect current geopolitical and economic

realities and ensure enhanced representation of developing countries, including both permanent and non-permanent seats for Africa. In our view, it is also important to ensure that small States can serve regularly as elected members of the Council.

I would like to assure the Assembly that the Nordic countries will contribute to a constructive dialogue among Member States, with a view to achieving further progress during this session of the General Assembly.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the L.69, a diverse group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific that are united by the common cause of achieving lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

In your acceptance speech (see A/71/PV.83) after your election to preside over the Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. President, you acknowledged that the most widely mentioned topic related to United Nations reform is reform of the Security Council. You further underscored that there is broad agreement that it is time to transform the Security Council into a twenty-first-century body, and you expressed your intention to work closely and consult widely with Member States on how to move forward the agreement that our leaders reached at the 2005 World Summit.

We would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, for continuing that process and for your letter of 30 October encouraging Member States to move forward, building on progress achieved in previous sessions of the General Assembly. We welcome the appointment of our distinguished colleagues Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates, and wish them every success in their efforts to move the process forward at a critical juncture. I would also like to take this opportunity to assure you and the co-Chairs, Mr. President, of our group's full support and cooperation during this session.

The United Nations has come a long way since 1945. In 1979, just 14 years after the first expansion of the Security Council, a request for a second expansion was made to the General Assembly. The initiation of the process for considering the agenda item relating to Security Council reform in the Assembly finally began in 1992. On 11 December this year, we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Assembly's adoption in December 1992, of resolution 47/62, which requested the Secretary-General to invite Member States to submit, not later than 30 June 1993, written comments on a possible review of the membership of the Security Council. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit for the Assembly's consideration at its forty-eighth session a report containing comments by Member States on the subject and decided to include on the provisional agenda for its forty-eighth session an item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council".

The intergovernmental negotiations process started in 2008, more than three years after our leaders at the 2005 World Summit clearly stated that speedy reform of the Security Council was necessary. While the commencement of the intergovernmental negotiations provided new hope to people around the world, 10 years later we are at a crucial juncture. Will we elect to continue with these so-called negotiations, which are at variance with the way we do business here at the United Nations and are a glaring exception to internationally accepted norms? The L.69 group is of the view that it is the responsibility of the entire membership of the General Assembly and you, Mr. President, to prevent that dysfunctional process from continuing. In that connection, we welcomed your expressed intention at the opening of the general debate in the seventy-second session to promote a credible process to address reform of the Security Council.

If we are serious about the credibility of the intergovernmental negotiations, we must, with a sense of urgency, introduce standard United Nations negotiating practices into their mode of operation. Failure to do so will not only put the entire process at risk but will also allow a minority to appropriate the process by using it as a vehicle for maintaining the status quo. That is not the purpose for which the intergovernmental negotiations were mandated. On the contrary, its mandate is to seek a solution that can achieve general agreement on the question of the Security Council's equitable representation and increased membership. We therefore favour a solutions-based approach to the intergovernmental negotiations process.

We would like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/72/510, which contains a letter that the L.69 group submitted to the President of the Assembly at its seventy-first session. Annexes I and II to the letter detail the wide support for the initiation of text-based negotiations from 164 Member States. In response to an assertion that only a few countries have engaged in

the intergovernmental negotiations process, we showed that more than 180 have engaged in the process since it began. We have also seen attempts by some to use the arguments for text-based negotiations to discredit other groups' positions. The call for a negotiating text is not a demand but reflects a shared responsibility. The requirement for a progressive and normalized process is not an achievement in and of itself, but a practical necessity. Without a text to guide that process, without a text to track the evolution and distillation of positions, we have seen how this abnormal process can hinder the earnest attempts of Member States to engage. During the last intergovernmental negotiations we saw how this peculiar approach creates the potential for unnecessary confusion and inadvertent misrepresentation or misunderstanding of Member States' positions by virtue of the fact that there are no records of how their positions have evolved over time.

Over the years, we have discussed the five key issues ad nauseam. We have gathered and discussed and heard positions and proposals from all groups and individual Member States many times over. Where do we go from here? That is the question we must answer before we reflexively commence our next round of so-called negotiations on that important issue.

Finally, Mr. President, you have made focusing on people your mantra, and rightly so. We were sent here to advocate on behalf of our people. Our engagement in the intergovernmental negotiations is not an intellectual exercise. We are accountable to our taxpayers for the use of their hard-earned dollars. In the spirit of transparency and openness, it is time for us to at least let the world see what we have been discussing for so many years. They have a right to know where we are and whether we are any closer to achieving our goals. If we are making progress, the people should see it. If we are not, they should also be made aware of what is hindering our progress. That is the minimum that we owe to our constituents, the people of the world. In that regard, it is our young people, in particular, whose lives will be shaped by the decisions taken by the Assembly.

Our group believes that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership is imperative in order to better reflect the realities of the contemporary world and achieve a more accountable, representative, transparent and, most importantly, relevant Security Council. In that regard, the issue of Africa's representation in both the permanent and non-permanent categories must be addressed by the Assembly in line with the African common position.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I hope that under your guidance and active engagement we will, as per your own words, move the process forward. We believe that the measure of that commitment will be manifested by the formulation of a negotiating text that serves to re-energize the intergovernmental negotiations process and lays a basis for speedy and meaningful reform.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for your sterling opening remarks articulating your commitment to putting in place a meaningful and credible reform process. They have set the stage for our consideration of agenda item 122, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the Permanent Representatives of Japan, on behalf of the nations of the Group of Four, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group of developing countries. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We meet for the annual consideration of this agenda item for the twenty-fifth consecutive time, even as we witness accelerating change all around us. A futurist cataloguing change in the twenty-first century concluded that between 2000 and 2014, the total of the changes affecting our lives was equivalent to that of the entire twentieth century. He also predicted that according to his law of accelerating returns, another twentieth century's worth of change will happen in half that time, by 2021. Of course, it appears that he forgot to study the practice and pursuit of this agenda item, which has remained unchanged for years before 2000 and years since 2014. This agenda item is indicative of the lack of even incremental change in our approach to issues of importance, oblivious of the pace of change all around us. As multilateral diplomats, we are indeed used to punishing processes, but never has a process itself become a punishment, as in this case.

If that is the new normal, it does not bode well for multilateralism. Never have the normative foundations of multilateral cooperation been shown to be weaker than in this instance. If the most representative of existing multilateral institutions can only muddle along, holding meetings and issuing reports that are not even minor stabs at marginal improvement, and if the gap between the demand for global governance and the

shortage of responses provided by existing multilateral institutions is growing, we need to ponder if what we are witnessing is the symptoms of a recession of multilateralism. There is no more vivid reflection of that deepening crisis of multilateralism than the dysfunctional Security Council, which no longer reflects contemporary realities and hence faces a crisis of legitimacy and credibility. Similarly, there is no greater example of the institutional inertia that resists constructive adaptation than the inability to translate discussions into a text for negotiations, despite 10 years of so-called intergovernmental negotiations authorized by the General Assembly and the Assembly's own annual consideration of the agenda item, which has continued since 1993.

At a time when proliferating transnational threats, deepening economic interdependence and worsening environmental degradation all call for effective multilateral action, we have fallen short of a substantive response on an issue as important as reform of the Security Council. That is a sign that the ageing pillars of the established multilateral order are creaking and crumbling all around us, unable to meet the need for change.

It is axiomatic that reforms tend to generate reforms. This year, the Secretary-General has drawn up a broad set of reform proposals, including in the area of peace and security. No reform of the United Nations peace and security architecture will be complete without reform of the Security Council. It would not be wrong to say that an unreformed Council could in fact undermine progress that could be made in other areas of that continuum. The time is therefore ripe for progress on Security Council reform as part of a wide-ranging agenda of reform during this session of the General Assembly.

So what should we specifically do to avail ourselves of this opportunity? First, as a French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, once said, war is too important to be left to the generals. In the modern era, perhaps, diplomacy seems to have become too important to be left to the diplomats. That need not be a bad thing. Modern challenges demand the concerted efforts not only of Governments but of whole societies. So society more generally could be more involved in the diplomatic process. Perhaps we should consider options whereby we open up the process so that others are aware of what is stopping the current discussions from even beginning on the path of a negotiating text. Transparency in the work of diplomats is a useful adaptation that we can consider as a pathway to progress in this changing world.

Secondly, the differences between those who advocate change and the defenders of the status quo are a recurring pattern in the history of any reform effort. The annexes to document A/72/510 detail the critical mass that is available for initiating a normal reform process. Having a negotiating text is not only a demand of the majority but, as the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has just said, the responsibility of all the membership. A normalized process does not guarantee results by itself. It expresses the good faith and sincerity of the entire membership. It is time to have a normal process, with a text and records of who said what, so as to help all of us understand one another's positions with greater clarity and respect.

Thirdly, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on commencing your stewardship of that process with the welcome appointment as co-Chairs of our colleagues Ambassadors Imnadze of Georgia and Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates. We wish them success in their efforts. We hope that under their leadership we will courageously move the process forward. We have had more than our share of routines, continuity and statements and too little of initiatives, flexibility and results. We call on the co-Chairs to replace routines with initiatives, continuity with flexibility and statements with results. Only then will we diplomats be able to do what the philosopher Edmund Burke paraphrased as those things that men of intelligence and goodwill would wish, five or 10 years hence, had been done. That opportunity lies within our grasp. As always, the choice is ours to make.

Ms. Bird (Australia): I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassadors Jinga and Khiari for ably leading the Security Council reform process during the previous session and, Mr. President, to warmly welcome your appointment of Ambassadors Imnadze and Nusseibeh as co-Chairs to take the process forward during the seventy-second session. We wish them the best of luck. They will need it.

While I hesitate to start on a negative note, I must express disappointment that there has not been greater progress on reforming the Council. Over the previous three sessions, we have taken constructive steps towards the ambitious and important reforms that are needed. Discussions in that regard have provided a useful foundation for reaching mutual understanding

and for finding common ground. However, we have not been able to proceed to concrete reform on the key issue of membership.

Australia's position on Security Council reform is well known. We have advocated reform of the Security Council for many years. Reforming the Security Council, like reform of other elements of the United Nations, is about ensuring that it is fit for purpose. It should be seen as a necessity, not an optional extra. To be relevant and effective, the Council should better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities, with greater representation for Asia, Africa and Latin America. We support expansion in the permanent and non-permanent categories. Such expansion should not inhibit the Council's ability to act swiftly and decisively but should take place within limits and be accompanied by improvements to the Council's working methods. Australia has long held that the Council's working methods should reflect greater transparency, better coordination with the General Assembly and better consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries.

Australia also urges all Member States, especially the permanent five, to commit to the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and the complementary French-Mexican declaration, which calls for restraint in the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocity. Those two related initiatives have formed one of the few welcome concrete steps taken towards Council reform in recent years.

We welcome the practical measures identified in the paper entitled "Elements of convergence on two key issues of Security Council reform: the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, and the size of an enlarged Security Council and working methods of the Council" and the subsequent paper entitled, "Elements of commonality and issues for further consideration on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". We now urge Member States to move towards implementation without delay. That includes moving to text-based negotiations, which would build momentum and demonstrate our commitment to delivering these reforms. If we collectively fail to take this next step, and simply reiterate well-known positions again, it will bring this reform process into question. If the end product of our deliberations is yet another "Elements" paper, the credibility and relevance of the process will be in doubt.

The Security Council must uphold its mandate to maintain international peace and security. We acknowledge that it can act effectively when necessary. We note in particular its response to the recent provocations by North Korea. But the Security Council, like other parts of the multilateral architecture, must be able to adjust to changes in the global landscape. It cannot operate in a vacuum. It is necessary for the credibility of the United Nations that we undertake meaningful reform of the Council, especially on the crucial issue of membership.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Deteriorating humanitarian situations threaten regional and international stability. The possible atrocity crimes in Myanmar, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere demand unified action by the Security Council to provide peace, security and accountability. The Council, one of the principal organs of the United Nations, is equipped with powerful tools to alleviate human suffering and enforce peace and stability. But it frequently fails to live up to the expectations that people around the globe have for it. All too often, it is unable to use the powerful tools it was given under the Charter of the United Nations. That undermines perceptions not just of the Council itself but of the United Nations as an organization.

The pressing need for Security Council reform is beyond dispute. We have all said that time and again, including at the highest political levels. In the area of enlargement, however, there can be no prospect of progress as long as the deeply entrenched views on the opposing sides of the discussion prevail. Without any indication of flexibility, it is hard to imagine a way forward. Indeed, we must challenge the fundamentals of the process we are engaged in. We thank our colleagues from the United Arab Emirates and from Georgia for taking up the difficult challenge of leading our discussions. We will give them our full support, and we hope that they will be innovative and bold in their work.

As is well known, we have suggested an enlargement model that we hope could provide a middle ground in the discussion, adding long-term Council seats of eight to ten years with the possibility of immediate re-election. The other main elements of our proposal are no new veto powers, a strong review clause and a flip-flop clause that bars Member States that have lost

an election for long-term seats from running for short-term seats.

Enlargement of the Council does not equal reform. Who serves on the Council is certainly an essential question for how it is perceived and its credibility. How the Council goes about its daily business and carries out its functions is no less important. Together with like-minded States, we have worked consistently to help the Council do better in that respect, and we have achieved significant results. The creation of an ombudsperson for the Al-Qaida and Taliban sanctions regime, for example, was an initiative that had its origins outside the Security Council.

Another key initiative in that respect is the code of conduct on Council action on mass atrocity crimes. We had the honour to lead the efforts of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group that led to the code of conduct, which so far has been embraced by 114 States, all of which are committed to taking action to end and prevent atrocity crimes when serving as Council members. They will do so by committing to taking action to that effect and also by not opposing credible proposals suggested in the Council to that end. Recent situations of relevance to this issue include those in Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen, to name just a few. We have been gratified to see that the Secretary-General has submitted relevant information to the Security Council for action. The Council, however, has been frustratingly slow to respond. We believe that subscribing to the code of conduct is the minimum commitment we should be able to expect from any Council member. In future, therefore, we will support candidatures for the Security Council only from States that have signed the code of conduct. We also call on all States that have not yet done so to join the code of conduct as soon as possible.

Mr. Inguanez (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We would also like to join others in thanking you, Mr. President, for initiating this debate, and in congratulating the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform for this session. We would like to assure them of Malta's support and constructive engagement in the process.

Reform of the Security Council is a delicate and sensitive dossier. We are under no illusion as to the magnitude of the challenge. There is no doubt that strategic interests are at stake, which renders the process slow and wearing. That is inherent in the issues of reform under consideration, but we should not be deterred from taking an inclusive and transparent approach. On the contrary, that is perhaps even more essential. The more we debate, the more we explore ideas and the more we come to realize the short- and long-term implications of what we are talking about. We hold that it is not here or through a text that we will have the opportunity and the time to truly understand the effects, operational difficulties and implications of the proposals on the table. It is not here that we will have the time to analyse the repercussions of our ideas in depth. Rather, it is only through time itself that true, calm and objective reflection can take place on the complexities involved and their potential future impact. It is time that will enable the discussions to evolve and reach maturity. It is time that will enable Member States to reflect on and comprehend how multilateral diplomacy will unfold in the years to come by supporting one option over another.

In the meantime, in a positive and constructive spirit, the Uniting for Consensus group has sought to develop over the years a proposal that takes a consensus approach. It has tried to reach out to all States and include their concerns, while not prejudicing what we believe to be the essential principles of reform. The reform process is a Member State-driven exercise and a painstaking one. Malta acknowledges that what we discuss in the process reflects on the United Nations membership collectively and individually. Besides that, we affirm that what we discuss here affects and goes beyond Member States' interests and positions. It is therefore important to ensure that in the quest for ways to make the Organization reflect today's realities, we do not neglect the fundamental aims of reform — optimizing its organic democracy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and representation. This reform exercise is about sowing the seeds, whether we agree on them or not, for a new multilateral order. Only in that way can we recalibrate the system without creating new imbalances.

Malta believes that the aim of our reform should be first and foremost an equitable increase in representation with respect to Member States within an enlarged Council, bearing in mind today's new

realities. But in doing so, we should also recalibrate with regard to the whole of the United Nations membership — big, medium-sized and small States. Small States have a particular interest in seeing to it that future multilateralism leaves enough ground for them. Small States have an interest in seeing that the multilateral framework will not end up composed of a wider, if stronger, core and a weaker periphery. Small States want to play their part, but not on the fringes. We are cognizant of the difficulties involved. However, we remain full of hope that pragmatism will win over. Nothing can hinder us from working to find out in practical terms what we can achieve together, what we can improve and to what extent we can do that. With that in mind, we look forward to this year's negotiations.

Mr. Ja Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would first like to express my appreciation for the efforts of the representatives of Romania and Tunisia as last year's co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

The issue of Council reform is an important and pressing matter, given the currently complicated international situation, and we need it if we are to build a world of peace and stability. Today, the fundamental principles of international relations — equality, sovereignty and mutual respect — as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations are being seriously violated. Sovereign States are being openly subjected to interference, military intervention and massacres in the international arena. Under the pretexts of so-called non-proliferation and counter-terrorism, State-sponsored terrorism and plots against sovereign States are becoming more blatant. Terrorist forces are being formed on a global scale, and the catastrophic consequences of that are leading to a disastrous refugee situation.

Situations such as these, which seriously affect world peace and security, are caused by the United States, which uses its privileged position as a permanent member of the Security Council and its political clout to implement its strategy for world dominance. The United States, the biggest nuclear Power in the world, has continued to make historically unprecedented nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and has denounced the security measures we have taken as a threat to international peace and security while it continues to impose unlawful sanctions and resolutions one after another. Even more serious, the Security Council, which is responsible for world peace and security, has turned a blind eye to the nuclear threats and nuclear-war exercises that the United States has conducted against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for half a century, and has not taken a single measure to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

I also strongly condemn the remarks just made by the representative of Australia about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That country merely plays to the tune of the United States without knowing anything of the reality of the situation on the Korean peninsula.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea insists on total Security Council reform. We clarify our principled position as follows. First, reform of the Security Council should focus on ensuring impartiality, objectivity and democracy. Activities such as the adoption of resolutions that justify and legitimize the aggression of certain countries against others, in violation of truth and justice, should no longer be tolerated.

Secondly, Security Council reform should ensure the full representation of members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), as well as of developing countries. There can be no question that the more than 120 NAM and developing countries, which represent a majority in the United Nations, should have full representation on the Security Council. As we can see from the results of the intergovernmental negotiations, although 10 years have passed since the issue of expanding the Security Council was first addressed, the situation remains unchanged, owing to various countries' conflicting views. Under these circumstances, the only way to adjust the imbalance in the Council is to increase the number of non-permanent seats on it.

Japan's efforts to achieve permanent membership on the Security Council should never be tolerated. Japan is a major criminal State, having militarily invaded many Asian countries and committed heinous, unimaginable crimes against humanity and crimes of sexual slavery in particular. The fact that Japan, which is denying such inhumane crimes and is now showing tendencies towards militarism, is seeking a permanent seat on the Council is grotesque and an open affront to the international community.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has thus clarified its principled position on Security Council reform and expresses the hope that

the international community's protracted efforts to reform the Security Council will bear fruit in future.

Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We are confident that under their leadership and given their abilities, we will be able to make progress in reaching consensus on this vital issue. I would of course also like to express our gratitude for the good work done previously by the Permanent Representatives of Tunisia and Romania and for the elements of consensus that they were able to provide in past negotiations.

My delegation renews its commitment to ensuring that the Security Council reform process is participatory, exhaustive, transparent, equitable and, above all, viable and adaptable to today's world and its challenges. Institutions cannot remain static or paralysed at this historic time. Rather, they should be prepared for change and for evolving effectively in order to face the circumstances and the challenges to which they must respond. Without question, the global political and economic reality of 1945 is not commensurate with the current reality; nor is that of 1965. It is therefore appropriate and urgent that we review the structure and functioning of the Council. We believe the Council must have sufficient flexibility and the capacity to respond to current challenges and that it must be efficient, representative and transparent. If we want the Council to maintain its validity and legitimacy and to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter of the United Nations, we must be willing to accept that maintaining the status quo is not an option.

In that connection, the main goal of the reform should be to ensure that the Security Council can respond appropriately to any threat to international peace and security in the current global situation. However, inertia and paralysis prevail, thereby exposing the Council to a progressive loss of relevance and revealing its obstinate failure to act in the face of the normative power of the facts — the realpolitik — which poses a greater threat to the world order.

That paralysis has become increasingly evident, for example, with the use or threat of use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council. Far from supporting the defence of the collective interest with arguments that facilitate consensus, the non-acquiescence of the permanent members has obstructed and distorted the common interest, which in turn foments division among the members of the Council, leading to an abdication of the serious responsibilities that fall to it. Moreover, over time we have found that the concerns expressed by many delegations during the San Francisco Conference in 1945 regarding the veto were completely valid and justify further consideration of that issue. That is why Guatemala questions whether the veto should be allowed at all, even if other States seek that power within the framework of Security Council reform. One approach to circumvent the veto problem can be found in the proposals of France and Mexico with regard to a declaration to restrict the use of the veto, with the additional guidance of a code of conduct regarding the action that the Security Council should ideally take in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We believe that the contribution made by those delegations represents a valuable alternative.

We know that any change is difficult, and that is why we believe that the intergovernmental negotiation process should seek to make gradual progress in a progressive reform process that includes the membership and working methods of the Security Council. Only with the commitment and political will of all Member States, without impositions, can we achieve that goal. Our collective approach must be aimed at achieving a viable and practical agreement through a process in which we are all willing to be flexible and transparent. Only that would allow the Security Council to adapt to current and future circumstances.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): Brazil associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Japan on behalf of the Group of Four, and by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group, and would like to add the following comments in its national capacity.

This session's debate on this agenda item is particularly timely, as it takes place during broader discussions of reforms that the Secretary-General wishes to implement within the United Nations. The need to modernize the United Nations and put it in a better position to address current challenges underlies those proposals. We expect that those reforms will include a democratization of the United Nations system, which will not be achieved unless the reform of the Security Council takes place. We were pleased that this

January, in Addis Ababa, Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated the assessment by his predecessor Kofi Annan that "no reform of the United Nations will be complete without the reform of the Security Council". Any attempt to reform the United Nations and bring its structures in line with current realities cannot overlook the reform of the Security Council.

In this year's opening meeting of the general debate, President Michel Temer also underscored the imperative of reforming the United Nations. He highlighted that

> "it is particularly necessary to enlarge the Security Council to adapt it to the realities of the twenty-first century. It is urgent that we listen to the will of the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly." (*A/72/PV.3, p.7*).

Brazil was not alone in underlining the urgent need for Security Council reform in the general debate. A significant number of countries also expressed concern about the outdated structure of the current composition of the Council and mentioned the need to adjust it to contemporary realities. Many pointed to its inefficiency and paralysis in dealing with the most pressing challenges to peace and security. That poses a great risk to its credibility and legitimacy. It is noteworthy that the vast majority of such statements come from developing countries, which are underrepresented in the most powerful decision-making organ of the United Nations. It is past time to redress that underrepresentation — especially that of African countries, the only continent not to have a permanent seat in the Council.

We welcome your commitment, Sir, at the opening of this session's general debate to "promote a credible process to address the reform of the Security Council" (*A/72/PV.3, p.6*). Brazil congratulates the Permanent Representative of Romania, Ambassador Ion Jinga, and the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Mohammed Khaled Khiari, on their work as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the previous session of the General Assembly, and welcomes the appointment of Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates as co-Chairs for the current session. As always, they can count on Brazil's full support in their endeavour.

Brazil expects the General Assembly at the current session to build on the progress made during the sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first sessions. The documents produced by the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during those sessions form a solid basis for text-based negotiations, which is the next logical step in the process. The previous years' exercises showed that convergence is possible and helped us to identify where the widest gaps remain. We should not refrain, however, from drafting a concise document that also reflects competing views. That is precisely what negotiation is about: an attempt to find common ground on areas where we do not necessarily converge. We expect to see text-based negotiations launched during the current session with a view to leading the intergovernmental negotiations towards a long-overdue concrete outcome.

Ms. Azucena (Philippines): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary debate to discuss the important question of reform of the Security Council. The Philippines supports the General Assembly's reaffirmation of its central role in that matter and its resolve to continue negotiations immediately. We count on your leadership to ensure continuity with the progress that has been achieved over the past years.

We also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates for having been appointed recently as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We are confident that they will exert every effort to carry the negotiations forward for the benefit of all Member States.

I would like to reiterate the support of the Philippines for an enlarged Security Council with an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent, or elected, members of the Security Council. The Philippines supports the proposal to increase the number of Council members to up to 27. We believe that a broader membership would better reflect twenty-first century geopolitical realities and contribute to the pursuit of the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Critical to an enlarged Security Council is the balance in geographical representation, taking into account the size of the populations of regional groups. We must ensure that the Council is the one venue where the voices of all peoples of the world are heard. In that context, I wish to highlight the situation of the Group of Asia-Pacific States. The Group accounts for almost

60 per cent of the total population of all States Members of the United Nations. Moreover, with 54 Member States, it accounts for 28 per cent of the total United Nations membership. In peacekeeping operations all over the world, the Asia-Pacific countries contribute about 40 per cent of the total human resources needed to run those operations. Yet in the Security Council the Group accounts for only 20 per cent of the total number of seats, that is, only three seats — one permanent, two elected — out of the 15 seats. We should address that underrepresentation so as to ensure that the Security Council is truly representative of the interests of the peoples of the world.

An equally critical challenge that an enlarged Security Council has to tackle is how to remain effective and efficient. An enlarged Council must be able to act swiftly and decisively, with the highest standards of accountability, coherence, transparency and fidelity to the trust accorded to it by the greater United Nations membership. While any expansion could pose challenges to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council, my delegation believes that prioritizing key issues, particularly the reform and improvement of the working methods of the Council, could provide an antidote to any of those concerns.

The Philippines also reiterates its view that the veto power has no place in a twenty-first century Security Council. No Member State should be granted the special privilege to exercise the veto power, as that is in direct contravention of the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, as enshrined in the Charter. We appreciate that the question of the veto is the most formidable challenge in our work to reform the Security Council. While the abolition of the veto continues to be our aspiration, we should all be prepared to take small steps that will hopefully bring us closer to that goal. To that end, the Philippines is open to considering ways to rationalize the use of the veto power by the Council's permanent members. We support the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group's code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative, which spells out exceptions to the right to use the veto power. We also support the proposal that the extension of the right of the veto to new permanent Council members will be decided upon in the framework of a review. We understand that to mean that the new permanent members shall not exercise the veto until such review is concluded.

Over the years, there has already been a significant amount of work undertaken on Security Council reform. It is about time that our serious efforts lead to concrete results. The Philippines believes that the immediate commencement of text-based negotiations, as called for by many Member States, is a step in the right direction. We see it as a way to attain our aspiration for a truly representative and effective Security Council.

Mr. Masuku (Swaziland): Here we are at yet another session of many in which the item before us today is under discussion. I applaud the General Assembly for consistently keeping this matter under its focus, and I also commend the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform for the work they have done so far to achieve progress in the debate on the issue. In the same vein, we welcome the incoming co-Chairs, and we pledge our support as they take on their monumental task.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States, and we welcome this opportunity to elaborate further on the matter in our national capacity.

The Security Council plays a key role in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the arm of the United Nations that has been given important and far-reaching powers to act on behalf of the broader membership of the United Nations. It acts on our behalf and is meant to represent the interests of all. It is therefore crucial that the Security Council be reformed so that it can reflect the realities of the twenty-first century, which would make the Council more democratic, legitimate, representative, responsive and transparent in its working methods and decision-making processes. In that vein, I wish to reiterate the commitment of my delegation to this very important issue. We look forward to working with all Member States in building on the gains made thus far and to achieving consensus on the issues before us.

Notwithstanding the regrettably prolonged nature of the reform process, the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have helped to illuminate the various positions that have been held by the various groupings of Member States. Certain areas where there is a convergence of views have been identified and, conversely, areas of divergence have also been highlighted. However, no matter how brilliant those views may be, they require further deliberation so

as to ensure progress towards inclusivity. It is therefore incumbent upon us to find the means to move from the current position of seeming deadlock and give fresh impetus to the reform process.

To that end, we reiterate the position of the Group of African States as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. It is only reasonable for Africa to be represented in the permanent-member category of the Security Council. Not only is the Council's agenda mainly concentrated on Africa, but such representation would also be a true expression of democratic practice. For a continent with 54 Member States, that is only fair. In spite of the fact that there are some who are at odds with that claim, we appeal to their moral sensibilities to consider the right thing. Is it fair to say that some are of no concern in the face of the injustice of history? A bit of empathy does not compromise anything. The principle of regional representation should rule supreme in this matter, in particular for the simple reason that the Security Council should resemble the character of the General Assembly, an Assembly that reveres the Charter, made famous by its statement, "We the peoples of the United Nations".

It is also our resolve to stand behind the increase of membership in the non-permanent category. It is immaterial how big the expansion is, but the details should reflect the geopolitical realities of the world today. The Security Council cannot be a dogmatic body, and the stature of its current membership brings into question the modernity and credibility of the United Nations.

With regard to the allocation of veto privileges, we fully subscribe to the prescription in the African Common Position. The veto should be extended to all new members in the permanent category as long as that power exists. Alternatively, we are comfortable with its abolition. However, to put everything into perspective, it is the feeling of my delegation that the veto is not in itself harmful; however, it is so within its current operational confines. In recent years, decorum has prevailed, but we are also mindful and similarly fearful of a once-in-a-century obstinacy rearing its head. Do we then curtail or re-engineer the use of the veto and prescribe certain operational parameters? Does it still retain its name after that? Those and other questions require further probing. In conclusion, we pray for a way forward sooner rather than later, and will endeavour to be progressive in the discussions of the matter. We call upon all our fellow Member States to adopt a similar approach.

Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair

Mr. Sukhee (Mongolia): At the outset, I would like to join many others in expressing our sincere appreciation for the convening of this important meeting and in welcoming the appointment of Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia as the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. I wish to assure them of our delegation's full support and cooperation with the aim of moving that process forward in our shared endeavour to reform the Security Council. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Ambassador King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

My delegation shares the view that we should continue moving the process forward through negotiations, building on the work of previous sessions and the framework document and its annex, as well as the elements of convergence paper on two key issues of the reform. Mongolia also believes that the Security Council should be reformed to make it more accountable, representative, transparent, efficient and effective. It is therefore important that, based on those common elements and positions, we begin the process towards the path of text-based negotiations.

In a Member State-driven process, the call by Member States to have all views respected and reflected in a negotiating text is something that can be addressed only with a clear road map for progress in that process and a structured approach aimed at concrete results. As such, the intergovernmental negotiations process has an important role to play, and we join others today in calling for the commencement of text-based negotiations without further delay, taking into account the fact that an overwhelming majority supports expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of the membership of the Security Council.

I would also like to reaffirm our principled position concerning the reform of the Security Council on three key issues. Regarding the categories of membership, Mongolia has consistently stood for a just and equitable expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Our stance in favour of an enlargement of both of the current categories is guided by and based on

the composition set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and is reflective of contemporary realities, as well as the principles of justice and equality, in order to ensure the greater and enhanced representation of developing countries, particularly the non- and underrepresented regional groups.

With respect to the question of the veto, it is our view that the veto should be abolished. We could also support the restricted use of the veto power in the Security Council, in particular with regard to decisions relating to Chapter VII of the Charter. So long as it exists, the veto power should be extended to all new members in the permanent category of the Security Council, which must enjoy all the prerogatives and privileges of the current permanent membership.

On the key issue of regional representation, adequate representation of all regions, particularly non- and underrepresented, in both of the categories of the Security Council must be duly considered. The solution should to be fair and just. We therefore attach high importance to the criterion of equitable geographical distribution, with an emphasis on the non- and underrepresented groups, particularly Africa, Asia and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. As to the non-permanent category, strengthening a fair and equitable rotation system within a geographical regional group is an important issue for my delegation. In that respect, my delegation also supports the addition of seats to the current regional groups, specifically with a view to ensuring the representation of small developing States.

In conclusion, it is our firm belief that only through genuine text-based negotiations will we find convergences and bridge our differences so as to achieve a meaningful and early reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I would like to thank the President for convening this plenary meeting early in his presidency and for giving priority to the issue of Security Council reform. We welcome the active engagement of the President in that important process.

I join previous speakers in congratulating Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates on their appointment as the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We are confident that they will continue to lead the work of the intergovernmental negotiations in an inclusive, transparent and efficient manner, and that we will make progress under their leadership.

We would also like to place on record our appreciation to the former co-Chairs, Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania and Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia. Their excellent work during the last round of intergovernmental negotiations culminated in an important paper on the elements of commonality and issues for further consideration. I commend both of them for their leadership and hard work. The paper that they prepared builds on the work of the intergovernmental negotiations over the past two years. Together with the framework document and the elements of convergence paper, their latest paper provides a good foundation for our work in the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

As we resume another year of negotiations under the intergovernmental negotiations process, it is important to keep in mind a few facts. The intergovernmental negotiations started to function in 2009. Before the intergovernmental negotiations process, the open-ended working group was launched in 1993. In other words, we have been discussing the issue for a quarter of a century, as many previous speakers have mentioned. No one expects that such a difficult issue can be resolved overnight. But nor is it reasonable or credible to expect the intergovernmental negotiations process to continue for another quarter of a century without any results to show.

Allow me to put it starkly — is the intergovernmental negotiations process a help or hindrance to the reform process? The answer depends on whether that process is able to deliver concrete progress. If the intergovernmental negotiations process is able to demonstrate progress, it will be regarded with respect and credibility. However, if it is not able to, there will be serious questions as to the value of continuing the intergovernmental negotiations process.

If we are serious about reforming the Security Council, we need to inject a greater sense of urgency into our work and aim to reach a real negotiating process. We cannot treat that process as an annual ritual that serves merely to keep delegations busy and preoccupied. Ultimately, Security Council reform is the key to maintaining the relevance and credibility of the United Nations system as a whole. If the Security Council continues to operate in a business-as-usual manner, it will be unable to deal effectively with

the intractable challenges that we all face in today's complex global environment.

As a small State, Singapore has always been a firm advocate and defender of a rules-based, multilateral system. The role of the Security Council is critical in such a system. We therefore attach great importance to the intergovernmental negotiations process, because we want a transparent, accountable and effective Security Council. As a small State, Singapore does not stand to benefit directly from any particular model of reform or Security Council expansion. What we seek is the strengthening of the multilateral system. Singapore's position on Security Council reform is clear.

First, we believe in making the Council more representative and inclusive. We support an expanded membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership in the Council. That is necessary, in our view, if we are to ensure that the composition of the Council embodies the diverse membership of the United Nations as it exists today.

Secondly, reform should make the Council more accountable, transparent and inclusive for all Member States. In particular, the reform process should not disadvantage small States in their efforts to seek election to the Security Council. For many small countries like Singapore, that factor is important, as we do not have many opportunities to serve in the Council.

Thirdly, our work must make the Council more effective in dealing with the many challenges that it faces today. All that Singapore needs and expects of the Security Council is that it be able to act swiftly and decisively when confronted by global crises. What we do not want is a Security Council that is paralysed by political divisions or prevented from acting by the use of the veto.

As we embark on the current session of intergovernmental negotiations, we need to build on the excellent work of the previous co-Chairs and sustain the momentum for progress. The paper prepared by the co-Chairs at the previous intergovernmental negotiations session was an important outcome, as it identified in one consolidated document the key elements of commonality on all five clusters of issues pursuant to decision 62/557, and it also listed other issues that merit further reflection and discussion. We need to use that paper to take our work forward. Allow me, in that connection, to make some suggestions, which may help to guide our work during the upcoming session.

First, we need to look anew at the elements of commonality and identify areas in which we can take advantage of the progress already made. For example, some of the elements of convergence relating to the working methods of the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly are already in the process of being implemented, such as an increase in the number of open meetings of the Council, the regular meetings between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the submission of annual reports by the Security Council.

In that regard, we welcomed the adoption of the revised Security Council presidential note S/2010/507, which builds on previous Security Council efforts to improve the Council's working methods and to enhance its efficiency and transparency, as well as the interaction and dialogue with non-Council members and bodies. There is scope for the General Assembly to acknowledge and formalize those improvements so that they become standard work procedures, rather than ad hoc, informal measures taken by the Council. In our view, there are some practical steps that we can take now, without making any amendments to the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to improving the practices of the Security Council.

Secondly, we should continue our discussions on issues that have been identified for further consideration. There will naturally be differing points of view and perspectives, but that should not prevent us from having an open and frank discussion of the issues. We should attempt to narrow differences, try to broaden the elements of commonality, and hopefully include new areas of convergence. In that regard, we would support entering into substantive negotiations by putting ideas and proposals on paper and having a focused debate on those ideas and proposals.

Thirdly, we should revisit some of the issues that enjoyed strong support but were not ultimately included in the paper prepared by the co-Chairs last year as points of commonality. One issue that could be considered for inclusion as a point of commonality is the growing support for the limitation of the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities. A majority of Member States support that proposal, and, as far as we recall, no delegation expressly objected to it at the previous intergovernmental negotiations session. In our

view, we should take an inclusive approach and work to improve the co-Chairs' paper with new points of commonality, particularly when there is strong support for them.

The suggestions that we have just made are aimed at advancing the intergovernmental negotiations process. As we have said many times, the imperative for Security Council reform remains more real than ever before. We need to accelerate the pace of our work aimed at achieving early and meaningful reforms. My delegation will work with the President of the General Assembly as well as with the two new co-Chairs and other delegations to advance the reform agenda and make the Security Council more open, accountable, effective, and inclusive.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting, which I consider to be of the utmost importance as it addresses one of the most controversial issues within the Organization, namely, undertaking the reform of the Security Council. Undoubtedly, as the President said this morning, this may very well be an opportunity for all of us to finally to move towards a consensus that would enable us to progress consistently within the intergovernmental negotiations. I would like to join my colleagues who spoke before me in thanking Ambassadors Ion Jinga of Romania and Mohamed Khiari of Tunisia for their successful and very constructive work guiding the discussion process of the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session. I also take this opportunity to welcome Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates for taking the reins as the new co-Chairs.

The reform process is one that requires the entire membership to continue moving forward in identifying those points that bring us closer together in discussions, so that we can finally count on a Security Council that reflects the current geopolitical reality, its various nuances and the need for greater accountability and transparency in the Council's work. On behalf of my country and in aligning myself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, I would like to highlight several elements that we consider to be of key importance for the beginning of the current session.

First, the moment is undoubtedly ripe for advancing the process with new vigour, as the President said in his statement this morning. To achieve that, it is important, in our view, to reiterate once again that — for the Uniting for Consensus group — the fundamental difference with respect to other proposals lies only in our firm conviction that a Council of more democratic and inclusive nature would result from the participation of a greater number of elected members. We would also seek to prevent the expansion of privileges such as the right of the veto.

We believe that, as the most representative Organization at the global level, the United Nations must lead by example — which should be manifest particularly in the body that is fundamentally responsible for peace and international stability. Attaining that goal rests on two fundamental pillars: regional representation and the accountability emanating from regular elections. In that context, the document produced by the co-Chairs at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly made it clear that all Member States, without exception, wish to reform the Security Council.

We understand that after the several decades since the previous reform and the 10 years of intergovernmental negotiations, the issue of expanding the Council has assumed the utmost importance if we wish to improve the representation of the regions and groups that are underrepresented, such as Africa and my own region, Latin America and the Caribbean, to give just two examples — as was made clear in Sierra Leone's statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

By adopting the proposal of the Uniting for Consensus group, we could finally achieve a membership size that is fair in relation to the weighting of issues on the Council's agenda and geopolitical representation. Inclusivity and democracy in the reform of the Council will not be achieved by perpetually extending the privileges of a few with regard to permanent membership and the right to veto, as has been reiterated by a number of delegations that have already made their statements.

On the other hand and in line with the proposal of the Uniting for Consensus group, we must insist that a process of regular elections and fair geographical regional distribution is the way to ensure a strengthened Security Council. Furthermore, as explained by Ambassador Inigo Lambertini of Italy, longer

membership terms would strengthen the inclusive nature of the system, allowing the Council to become a more representative, transparent and effective space, with sufficient legitimacy for the permanent fulfilment and implementation of its mandates.

For Colombia, it is important to stress that expanding the membership of the Security Council must respect the principle of sovereign equality, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why it is our duty to work in such a way as to ensure that the United Nations is ready to face the challenge of a world that demands that everyone play an active role in building a peaceful and increasingly inclusive society.

Mr. Kafle (Nepal): Nepal commends President Lajčák's initiative in holding this debate on the important agenda item of Security Council reform. I congratulate the Permanent Representative of Georgia and the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates on their being appointed co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. My delegation believes that the negotiations process will soon resume under their able leadership and dedication to steer it with active and participatory consultations. I wish every success to the co-Chairs and pledge my delegation's full cooperation. I would also like to compliment the important leadership of the past co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations.

We must acknowledge the unanimity among Member States on the urgent need to reform the Security Council. However, the intergovernmental negotiations have become increasingly complex and slow moving, with far too limited progress. The challenge ahead is to build on the progress made so far and exhibit the political will to move forward. My delegation commends the elements of convergence that have emerged on two key issues, namely, the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly and the size of an enlarged Security Council and its working methods. We must continue to build on that progress, while combining synergies and the strongest sense of cooperation for the next steps.

We live in a world that has undergone significant changes. The global political landscape has changed dramatically, and the contours of the balance of power are being redefined. The United Nations has expanded four-fold since its creation, while the Security Council has experienced just one limited expansion. Reform is essential in order to ensure that the Council will be able to handle the challenges of the modern era and the emerging realities. The current state of affairs is, therefore, not an option, and Nepal calls for flexibility from Member States to reach convergence on other remaining clusters so that we can move forward in the reform process.

Nepal has been a long-standing partner in United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection around the world and is honoured to have served twice so far in the Council. As far as Security Council reform is concerned, Nepal does not belong to any group and from its national perspective merely wishes to reiterate a number of points. The expansion of the number of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council must reflect the contemporary geopolitical reality. In short, Nepal underscores the need for greater representation in the Council for Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regional groups. The expansion of the permanent member category should correct that historical error and ensure the representation of Africa, among others.

Likewise, it is essential to ensure the equitable representation of developing countries. In that connection, Nepal understands the merit of the aspirations of the Group of Four to join the Council as permanent members. Nepal believes in the fair and judicious principle of rotation on a regional and subregional basis. In particular, the contribution to international peace and security should be given due recognition during nomination and election, especially when the contributing countries are relatively small and face special situations, such as the landlocked developing countries or countries emerging from conflict. In fact, the landlocked developing countries should be represented as a special constituency in the Council, based on their special permanent feature of a geographical hardship with serious security implications.

Nepal supports the total elimination of the right to veto, in conformity with the principle of sovereign equality. Nevertheless, until we reach the state of the absolute abolition of the right to veto, Nepal supports exercising restraint on the use of the veto. There should be no new tier of members introduced, such as permanent members with or without veto. The expansion of membership should ensure equitable geographical representation and should enhance inclusiveness in the decision-making process of the Security Council. Any

enlargement of the Security Council sh ld take into account the concerns of the smaller countries.

The Council should neither be so big that its efficiency is seriously compromised, nor so small that it fails to be representative. Therefore, the size of the Security Council should be expanded to 24, ensuring that each non-permanent member of the Council can hold the presidency at least once during its two-year term. The intergovernmental negotiations are a Member State-driven process. We stress the need for a democratic, representative, transparent, inclusive, effective, efficient and accountable process to make the Council fit for purpose in fulfilling the mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Nepal affirms that the Council should not encroach on the authority and work of the General Assembly and other organs. While we welcome the increased exchange of information between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, we would also like to see an enhanced level of coordination and consultation between the two bodies so as to maintain accountability, transparency and coherence in the work of the Council.

In order to enhance transparency there should be more briefings and information-sharing for non-members about the decisions of the Council. While welcoming the Council's open meetings, which enable non-members to be heard, the Council should also seek to ensure that all important ideas are taken on board in the decision-making process. In conclusion, only the strong political will and flexibility for convergence among Member States with regard to the much-needed Security Council reform will contribute to enabling the Council to fulfil its goal of maintaining international peace and security and creating a peaceful world. Sooner rather than later, all Member States should kick-start their efforts in that direction.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. My delegation also congratulates the Ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates and Georgia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. We assure them of our full support in moving this process forward.

Over the years, we have become accustomed to hearing a litany of complaints from a handful of delegations about the slow pace of reform. They argue that the intergovernmental negotiations process has become a means to perpetuate the status quo, rather than a vehicle of change; and that in time the process has become an end in itself.

Taken at face value, that view has merit, but we cannot but marvel at those delegations for liberally blaming others when the responsibility for the impasse lies squarely on them. These countries seek a privileged and unequal status for themselves, anchored in power politics, which is in sharp contradiction to the democratic spirit of our times. Even more telling, while they remain firmly wedded to their positions, they ask others to be flexible. It is equally disingenuous for them to invoke the majority principle in seeking membership of the Council, when they deny the same principle to the larger membership of the United Nations when they are being held to account. It is not a lack of will on the part of the many, but a lack of will on the part of a few that remains the most persistent stumbling block in the way of achieving a more representative, transparent, accountable and effective reform of the Security Council.

Decision 62/557 lays the overarching framework and mandate for intergovernmental negotiations — a membership-driven process with the aim of achieving comprehensive reform on the five equally important and interlinked issues, which are to be facilitated in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, with the objective of achieving the widest possible political acceptance on the part of the membership. Those are not just noble aspirations, but agreed parameters for reform.

Yet what we have seen, unfortunately, is the repeated tendency by some to sidestep consensus through quick fixes and procedural manoeuvres. Such attempts not only turn the process into a majority-minority calculus and undermine mutual trust, but they also betray a lack of common understanding over the fundamentals of the issue. Seeking to introduce a text into such a chasm will not bridge our differences, it will accentuate them. We would be better served by not chasing such a chimera. What is required is not to set artificial deadlines, but instead, to heed the call for flexibility and readiness to find common ground. The Uniting for Consensus group has lived by that ideal, calibrating its position to reflect the interests and aspirations of all Member States — small, medium-sized and large. It is time for others to show the same spirit of compromise and the same spirit of flexibility.

Pakistan's views on Security Council reform are well known. We are firmly opposed to the creation of new permanent seats, as they are contrary to the universally agreed principles of democracy, accountability and transparency. After all, permanent membership remains at the core of much that is flawed about the existing Security Council. It is therefore counter-intuitive, in our view, to advocate an expansion in the Council as a means to address its inherent dysfunctionalities. That could, at best, be a measure to promote the self-serving interests of a few who deride the permanent membership as an anachronism, yet stand ready to embrace it in the same breath. It cannot become the rationale for a well-meaning and comprehensive reform effort. An enlarged permanent membership of the Security Council would also compromise its efficiency and effectiveness.

At a time when growing and complex challenges to global peace and security warrant firm and clear action by the Security Council, an enlarged permanent membership, operating on the basis of the least common denominator, would erode the standing of the Council and not strengthen its role, as some would have us believe. On the other hand, expansion in the non-permanent category of membership, based on equitable geographic distribution and a system of fair rotation, a solution that my country favours, is both fair and just and is supported by all Member States and groups. That should serve as a natural point of departure for any reform of the Security Council.

It also speaks to the imperative of reflecting contemporary realities. As contemporary realities are tied to the present, how can a permanent status be bestowed upon a transitory, impermanent state. That inconsistency can be answered only by longer-term non-permanent seats with possible re-election. Similarly, an expansion in the non-permanent category will foster a wider and fairer rotation within regional groups. What is needed are seats for the regions, not seats merely claimed on their behalf.

On the issue of regional representation, we fully respect the Common African Position, which voices the demand of an entire continent, as being inherently different from the demand for permanent seats in pursuit of narrow national ambitions.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm that Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Anything less would be a great disservice to the United Nations and the inspiring vision that it espouses for all our collective humankind.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): At the outset, allow me to thank the President for convening today's debate on this crucial topic. We are all convinced that the United Nations has to be fit for purpose and that Security Council reform should help to make the United Nations more credible and stronger. The Security Council needs to have the capacity and readiness to adequately respond to all the challenges in the world and live up to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But that has not, unfortunately, always been the case.

Before turning to some elements most important to Estonia regarding the reform, I would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Tunisia for their hard work leading the intergovernmental negotiations in the previous session and wish the very best for the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and United Arab Emirates in their endeavours during the seventy-second session.

Now, let me highlight the most important issues for Estonia in the Security Council reform process. We have had to witness, on numerous occasions, how some members of the Council have used or threatened to use the veto, leaving the Council paralysed and unable to react to situations where action is needed the most. Estonia has expressed before and continues to highlight its position that permanent members of the Security Council should voluntarily and collectively commit themselves not to use their veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending situations involving mass atrocity crimes.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, Estonia also supports the group's code of conduct calling for all members of the Council not to vote against credible Security Council resolutions that are aimed at preventing or ending genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We welcome the wide support expressed by 114 Member States for the code of conduct. Hopefully, more countries will be lending their support to the code in the near future. Estonia has also reiterated its support for the initiative by France and Mexico on the use of the veto. We believe that those two initiatives are complementary and share a common goal.

Let me also highlight another issue important to Estonia regarding the expansion of the Security

Council. The United Nations must adapt to the realities of current times. Estonia believes that every country, small or big, should have the opportunity to be represented in the Council, but it is absolutely vital that small nations have a stronger voice.

Finally, let me emphasize that small steps in improving the working methods of the Security Council can bring about a positive effect with much wider reach. Estonia would like to see greater accountability, coherence and transparency of the Council's activities through increased inclusiveness and targeted action. These principles are key in governing our State. We consciously apply them, as we believe they will make our governance more effective and easier to understand by people. We believe that the same principles would have an even greater effect at the regional or global level and therefore should be embraced and used by different international organizations, including the United Nations. As a body representing all States Members of the United Nations, the Security Council could also benefit from these principles.

We also need better communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Security Council should be kept accountable by all Member States by ensuring more transparency in its actions and more cohesiveness in resolutions and decisions. It is a shortcoming of the Council that its rules of procedure are still provisional. It is very much up to Council members to make use of existing procedures and the Council's different outreach formats to achieve a better outcome for their work.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Estonia's commitment to engaging constructively in the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-second session to continue moving the reform process forward.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): I thank the President for his initiative in convening this annual debate on Security Council reform. I also extend a warm welcome to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia. I have every confidence in their ability and leadership. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Jinga of Romania and Ambassador Khiari of Tunisia for their contributions as co-Chairs last year.

At the outset, the Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group.

We all have agreed on the imperative of reforming the Security Council, and the reason why we have been pursuing this agenda is quite clear. Facing the complex challenges of today, we are now feeling an increased sense of urgency to transform the Security Council into a more effective entity that is better able to fulfil its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

However, we have unfortunately not seen any meaningful progress since we started our discussions more than 25 years ago. But make no mistake: the lack of progress, I believe, is not due to our inaction or a weak sense of urgency. If anything, this situation reflects the degree of sensitivity and gravity required in this discussion, which will lead to a sea change in the international geostrategic landscape and the architecture of global governance and will eventually affect all people around the world. In this regard, let us remind ourselves that it is high time to think about the basics and purposes of our discussion and to redouble our efforts aimed at working together.

When we pursue the reform of the Council, I believe that the most important factors are, first, the principles of the reform; secondly, the process of our deliberations; and, thirdly, the actual outcomes. With respect to these three underlying factors, the Republic of Korea has very clear positions and views.

First and foremost, we have repeatedly suggested that the reform must be based on clear principles, namely, a democratic underpinning, representativeness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness. I am pleased to see that, over the most recent intergovernmental negotiations meetings, we have been narrowing, rather than widening, the gaps of our understanding on these principles. Without any hesitation, Korea firmly believes that the UfC position, which is highlighted by a new category of long-term re-electable seat, is the best fit for all our principles, such as being democratic, representative, accountable and effective.

Secondly, our entire deliberative process should be, as decision 62/557 articulates, aimed at seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. However, there must be more to the phrase "the widest possible political

acceptance" than just a number. Indeed, a spirit of working together towards a more expanded and robust consensus will be needed, particularly in an agenda as complicated as this one. At this moment, I believe that there is still a fundamental and philosophical difference of views between the expansion of permanent seats and the expansion of non-permanent seats with longer-term renewable terms.

Thirdly, Security Council reform is urgent, but the reform should be right and just. It must also be sustainable. Considering that the dynamics of international politics have been, and will constantly be, in a state of flux, it is of paramount importance to come up with a sustainable and democratic mechanism in the Council that works in the long term. Through such a mechanism, aspirant countries, including African States, should be given appropriate opportunities — now and in the future — to play an enlarged role in the Council.

I am confident that only through the creation of the longer-term re-electable seat could any country apply for this seat at any time — now or in future, when that country feels that it is ready to do so. This process, based on the election of a candidate, will ensure open competition and equal opportunity for all Member States.

To achieve our vision for a principled, sustainable and most widely acceptable reform of the Security Council, the Republic of Korea, along with other members of the Uniting for Consensus group, has proposed to establish a new category of longer-term re-electable non-permanent seats. Our suggestion is based on the clear conviction that reform cannot be accomplished by just following the concepts of permanency and veto, which was a system reflecting the unique situation and context after the Second World War. Further, a merely enlarged version of the current Council will eventually exacerbate the very problems that vex us today rather than solve them. Instead, we believe that increasing the number of democratically elected non-permanent seats, including longer-term seats, will alone offer a clear way forward. Moreover, it will avoid the problems of the veto altogether.

The permanency of seats and the veto represent a single issue — two sides of the same coin. Therefore, if we consider expanding the number of permanent seats, we will get entangled with the veto issue because the veto is inextricably linked to the concept of permanency; the problem lies in its very nature.

The Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that the seventy-second session of the General Assembly and the coming intergovernmental negotiations will produce tangible results as we strive to achieve the long-overdue reform of the Council. I assure the General Assembly that the Republic of Korea stands ready to constructively work with others to formulate a solution that can garner the support and understanding of the entire membership, and one that the general public and the people of the international community can fully believe in and welcome.

Mr. Cortorreal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I appreciate the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. We welcome the appointment of our colleagues Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia to co-chair the intergovernmental negotiations on this issue. We also thank Ambassador Jinga of Romania and Ambassador Khiari of Tunisia for their efforts in continuing to find points of convergence on the subject of Security Council reform.

Since the creation of the United Nations, the world has changed. The Security Council finds it increasingly difficult to prevent conflicts, consolidate peace and stop atrocities. In this context, Security Council reform becomes increasingly critical. We believe that such reform would guarantee the sustainability of the community of nations and global causes. We believe that the Security Council must live up to the demands of today's world and that of the future.

The Dominican Republic has been endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to take a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2019-2020, in the elections to be held in June 2018. If we receive the mandate from the members of the General Assembly, our main objective will be to redouble our efforts aimed at revitalizing the role of the Security Council, thereby enabling this important organ to face the new challenges that currently exist for small island developing States, such as climate change, environmental degradation and the increased frequency of natural disasters.

I would like to briefly recapitulate our position on Security Council reform. We reiterate our support for the expansion of both categories of seats — permanent

and non-permanent — in the Council. In this regard, we call for an improved representation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions, thereby lending due consideration to the adequate representation of the small and medium-sized Member States, which account for the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations. Likewise, we consider it necessary to reform the working methods of the Security Council with a view to increasing transparency and efficiency. We support the commitment to carrying out negotiations on the basis of decision 62/557, which the General Assembly adopted in September 2008.

We already have a fairly comprehensive historical record of the progress made during this cycle of intergovernmental negotiations, in particular the framework document prepared by the Ambassador of Jamaica in 2015, as well as the important contribution recorded in the last two sessions. We believe that, to achieve concrete results in and due respect for negotiation processes in the United Nations, political will is required.

Finally, the Dominican Republic would like to reiterate its willingness and commitment to continuing to constructively participate in all initiatives undertaken with the objective of creating a Security Council that reflects the diversity of the United Nations membership, which calls for the broadest flexibility in negotiations. We believe that such steps would increase the legitimacy, transparency and inclusiveness of the Organization. The role played by the General Assembly in the process of selecting the Secretary-General demonstrated that all Member States can and must contribute to strengthening the work of the United Nations, thus updating and expanding the democratic character of global governance.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I thank the President for convening this important plenary meeting and inviting us to speak. My delegation appreciates the fact that the President has decided to advance Security Council reform as one of his priorities for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly and for his leadership on this important issue.

International cooperation, understanding and genuine dialogue are increasingly necessary if we are to meet contemporary global challenges. A United Nations system that is fit for purpose is needed to support this cooperation. All Member States seem to agree in principle on the fundamental idea of reforming the United Nations in order to make it stronger and more responsive to the people it serves. Security Council reform is an essential part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, and Slovakia continues to be committed to finding a favourable outcome in terms of Council reform so as to make the organ more broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, on their respective appointments as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. I would like to assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the forthcoming negotiations. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the former co-Chairs, Ambassador Jinga and Ambassador Khiari, for their dedication and hard work.

We welcome the intensified efforts undertaken during previous General Assembly sessions to bridge proposals and identify ways to move the work forward. We should continue and accelerate the process of the intergovernmental negotiations based on the results reached by the end of the sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first sessions. I should like to note that my delegation joins other countries in calling for the start of text-based negotiations on Security Council reform that would give the intergovernmental negotiations a substantive meaning and take us to the next stage in this important process.

The position of my delegation on the possible review of the membership of the Security Council is consistent and well documented. Slovakia supports the expansion of membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and calls for an increase to no more than 25, representing geographical balance. The new members of the Council should, as a principle, have the same responsibilities and obligations as the current ones. I wish to underscore that a reformed Council should include one additional non-permanent seat for the Group of Eastern European States.

We welcome the developments in the direction of enhancing the Council's working methods. We hope that further improvements can be achieved on issues such as peacekeeping, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peace enforcement. Similarly, we welcome positive movements towards improving the Council's relationship with other United Nations

organs, such as the General Assembly, the Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Commission, inter alia, as well as regional and subregional organizations, especially the African Union, the European Union and others. These efforts should continue.

The five key reform issues set forth in decision 62/557 remain the guiding principles of our work in the intergovernmental negotiations. While divergent opinions remain about all five issues, we should explore them again in greater detail, giving special consideration to the following: first, how best to address the wide political acceptance of the common African position; secondly, how best to reflect the changing global reality in an updated Security Council; thirdly, how to effectively translate the universal agreement on the expansion of the two-year non-permanent-member category into practice, given that more than 60 States Members of the United Nations have never been members of the Security Council to date; and fourthly, how we can all move together to the next stage of negotiations.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to engaging in open, transparent, inclusive and results-oriented negotiations, with a view to moving the process forward during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President for having organized this meeting. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassadors Jinga of Romania and Khiari of Tunisia for their skilful work as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session of the General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Imnadze of Georgia and Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates for their respective appointments as co-Chairs for this session. They can count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation in working constructively on the issue that we are being asked to consider.

Argentina endorses the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. Nevertheless, I wish to make a number of points.

Once again, today we are tackling the work before us aware of the need to be flexible and find agreement. We are profoundly committed to multilateralism because such a commitment is the only guarantee of success. Argentina trusts that all delegations will demonstrate similar flexibility because only through multilateralism, based on concrete actions and leadership capability, will they be able to uphold the interests of all nations and bring about a Security Council that is more democratic, truly inclusive and efficient, and which could adequately fulfil the responsibilities assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Argentina was dismayed by the outcome of the last round of intergovernmental negotiations because we saw a group of countries stating that there was no agreement on the principle of democracy as a principal guide in the reform of the Council. The principle of accountability is crucial to ensure a more effective and efficient Security Council, which is an objective that, to date, has not met with disagreement.

If the Security Council is to be more effective and efficient, we need to enhance the transparency of its actions and strengthen its democratic representativeness. Argentina is therefore convinced that during the next intergovernmental negotiation process there needs to be an interest in achieving a more broad political agreement on Security Council reform and that issues of principle need to be addressed without delay, leading to agreements on such fundamental principles as equitable representation and membership categories, inter alia.

Based on our experience from this long process of negotiation, Argentina continues to be ready and willing to find innovative and robust ways that will ensure a more democratic representation on the Security Council, improve the prospects of non-permanent members and reform the working methods of the Council, making it more transparent, interactive and inclusive. The Charter states that in order to ensure rapid and effective action on the part of the United Nations, its Members entrusted the Security Council with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. It also recognizes that the Security Council acts on behalf of Members in discharging the functions imposed by this responsibility.

The victors of the Second World War assumed that responsibility on a permanent basis, but any State that sees peace as a key element of its development would must actively assume that responsibility as well. Argentina therefore supports only an increase in the non-permanent-member category, because permanency is intrinsically antagonistic to the notion of representativeness in a democratic context in which

the will of the represented legitimizes and periodically informs such representativeness. It is well known that any legitimate and representative democratic system worthy of the name is underpinned by the fundamental element of elections. Moreover, Argentina believes that including new permanent members on the Council would not ensure greater participation of the members that today are not represented therein and considers the idea of expanding the permanent-member category in the context of today's extremely complex and evolving international reality to be unpromising.

Since the Organization's very inception, the Argentine Republic has explicitly defended the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Against the backdrop of Security Council reform, this principle will be upheld only if we create conditions in which every Member State has a chance to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, giving greater prominence to regional representation by adjusting the relative proportions of regional group to bring about more equitable representation. The proposal of the Uniting for Consensus group takes this concern into account and is the only proposal of commitment presented in recent years to address in a balanced and fair manner the aspirations of the different groups that have participated in the intergovernmental negotiation process.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is of the utmost relevance for Argentina. We have taken every opportunity to encourage the Council to work in a transparent and open fashion and be accountable for all its actions before the Organization as a whole.

In conclusion, Argentina reiterates and reaffirms its willingness to continue working with an open mind on all proposals which, respecting the principles granted by the General Assembly, would bring positions closer with a view to implement the necessary democratic reform of the Security Council.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker for this morning's meeting on this matter. I wish to thank the interpretation service for its commitment and patience.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before closing this meeting, I wish to remind members that the consideration of agenda item 73, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance" (including sub-items (a), (b) and (c)), which was to take place in a meeting scheduled to take place on Thursday, 7 December, has been postponed to Friday, 8 December at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.